From: Alex Sagan
To: Simmons, Denise
Subject: Re: Please don"t support the boycott
Date: Friday, April 20, 2018 12:48:13 PM

Dear Councillor Simmons,

Thank you for the thorough reply. I appreciate your thoughtful approach to this.

Have a good weekend.

Alex Sagan

On Apr 19, 2018, at 5:47 PM, Simmons, Denise <dsimmons@cambridgema.gov> wrote:

> Dear Mr. Sagan,
>
> Thank you for your email. So far, I have not yet seen an actual draft of the proposed resolution asking the City to cease purchasing HP equipment and supplies. I understand there's been a great deal of concern in the community about this matter – yet I must underscore that **this will only appear on the City Council's agenda if one or more City Councilors sponsor it.** We will not know if it is on the agenda until either a City Councilor publicly declares that they'll be sponsoring this (to my knowledge, this has not happened), or until the agenda is finalized by the Clerk's Office and posted online on the Thursday evening around 5:30 pm prior to the Monday City Council meeting (indeed, I had originally heard that the organization looking to have this sponsored was looking to get this placed on the agenda for April 23. It will NOT be on this coming Monday's agenda, but the organization may be recalculating as to when they think this *can* be introduced). I can, at the very least, confirm that *I* am not a sponsor of such a resolution.
>
> There have been numerous passionate op-eds, emails, and social media posts condemning the City Council for drafting this resolution, for rushing this to a vote without adequate opportunities for the public to weigh in, nor even giving people a chance to read the resolution. Some people have condemned the City Council for seemingly being on the brink of passing this resolution, or for seemingly being on the brink of rejecting it. None of these scenarios are accurate. While I understand the passion behind this matter, I must clarify that we do not yet actually have a resolution or policy order in front of us, there has been absolutely no debate about this amongst the City Councilors, and the City Council will not have an opportunity to take this up for consideration *unless and until* a resolution is sponsored by at least one of us and introduced at a public meeting. At this point, I am not yet certain if such a resolution will be introduced or not.
>
> I appreciate your reaching out and sharing your views on this. I am currently reading up on this issue to be better informed, I am reviewing all the emails and letters coming in about this issue, and I am reaching out to our representatives in Congress to seek their input on an issue that is more international than municipal in scope. Should this matter end up on before the City Council – either on April 30 or at a later date – I will look forward to engaging in a thoughtful discussion and debate with my colleagues on the Council and then seeing how to best resolve this matter in a way that allows everyone to feel they have had a fair chance to be heard. Thank you.
>
> E. Denise Simmons
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>
> **From:** Alex Sagan <alex@sagan.org>
> **Sent:** Thursday, April 19, 2018 4:01 PM
> **To:** Simmons, Denise
> **Subject:** Please don't support the boycott
>
> Dear Councillor Simmons
>
> Thank you taking the time to read this note and hear my concerns about the agenda before the Cambridge City Council.
>
> As a long-time Cambridge resident and voter, a historian at Harvard, and an active participant in our civic life (I've served as an appointee on four city committees), I am writing you today with concerns about an ill-informed boycott agenda being pushed on the City Council.
>
> The proposed boycott of Hewlett-Packard is a calculated effort to stigmatize Israel, and to single it out for condemnation through a process which lacks transparency and undermines efforts for peace and reconciliation between Israelis and Palestinians. I hope you will not support such a policy in the name of the city and citizens of Cambridge.
>
> As you know, the contents of the proposed resolution have been kept confidential, contrary to open discussion and democratic process, but enough is known about the sponsoring organizations and the goals of the resolution to understand that what is proposed is neither coherent city policy nor true advocacy of the conditions that can produce peace in the Middle East.
>
> We would do better to consider the positions taken by mainstream organizations who advocate for peace and a two-state solution, all of which oppose such boycotts and the so-called BDS movement. Here is the J-Street position on BDS boycotts:
>
> https://na01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fjstreet.org%2Fpolicy%2Fboycott-divestment-and-sanctions-bds%2F%23.WtjxqGaZOL5&data=02%7C01%7Cdsimmons%40cambridgema.gov%7C4907d727a36e4d03a5d308df5a6306022%7Cc06a8be784794d73b35193bc9ba8295c%7C0%7C1%7C636597649065211176&sdata=isHbM4QSLS8Y56JQRQxVzZbm8PkCYRFojRLqt1u2nD8%3D&reserved=0
>
> Boycotts such as the one proposed will only strengthen extremists. I sincerely ask as a Cambridge voter that you not support it.
>
> I appreciate your time and would appreciate hearing your thoughts about this matter.
>
> Thank you,
>
> Alex Sagan, Ph.D.
> 14 Hubbard Park Road
> Cambridge, MA 02138